

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-10 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 IO-10 SAM-01

INRE-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 DPW-01

SAB-01 SCCT-01 DHA-02 ORM-01 AID-05 EB-07 /098 W

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O P 101612Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2963

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

USMISSION USUN PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP, SS, MO

SUBJ: SPANISH SAHARA: F POLISARIO FREES SPANISH SOLDIERS

REF: MADRID 5803

1. FORMIN CORTINA MADE A LIGHTNING VISIT TO ALGIERS
SEPTEMBER 9 AND, FOLLOWING A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT
BOUMEDIANE, RETURNED TO MADRID WITH THE THIRTEEN
SPANISH SOLDIERS TAKEN PRISONER BY F POLISARIO IN
INCIDENTS LAST MAY. THE MEDIA HAVE GIVEN
PERSONAL CREDIT TO CORTINA. THE ENTIRE OPERATION,
INCLUDING CORTINA'S FLIGHT, WAS CARRIED OUT IN SECRECY.

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2. WITH THE RELEASE OF THIRTEEN PRISONERS F POLISARIO HOLDS NO MORE SPANISH SOLDIERS; BUT STILL HOLDS CAPTIVE A SPANISH BUSINESSMAN FROM THE CANARIES SEIZED LAST SPRING. IT IS THE LATEST STEP IN A PROCESS OF ACCOMMODATION BETWEEN THE GOS AND F POLISARIO. (REFTEL.) GOS, WHICH STILL HOLDS AN ESTIMATED FORTY F POLISARIO SUPPORTERS, CAN BE EXPECTED TO RECIPROCATATE BY FREEING SOME OF THEM AS IT DID AUGUST 14.

3. THE MILITARY LIAISON OFFICE TOLD ASST DATT THAT GOS DID NOT HAVE "FORMAL" AGREEMENT WITH F POLISARIO, IMPLYING THAT THERE MIGHT BE SOME SORT OF INFORMAL UNDERSTANDING. THE MOVEMENT NEWS AGENCY HERE REPORTED A CLASH BETWEEN F POLISARIO AND ROYAL MOROCCAN TROOPS AUGUST 13.

4. ALGERIAN TERRITORY WAS USED BY THE F POLISARIO TO HOLD THE SPANISH PRISONERS AND ALGERIA HAS BEEN A MAJOR BACKER OF THE F POLISARIO. CLOSER SPANISH CONTACTS WITH THE F POLISARIO AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GOS MIGHT LEGALIZE THE FRONT'S STATUS IN THE SAHARA WOULD TEND TO DRAW MADRID AND ALGIERS CLOSER TOGETHER ON THE SAHARAN ISSUE.

5. THE CHARGE AND POL COUNSELOR TODAY PAID A COURTESY CALL ON LOS ARCOS ELIO, THE THIRD MAN IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. HE TOOK A CHARACTERISTICALLY CAUTIOUS APPROACH, BUT INDICATED THAT F POLISARIO HAD FROM ITS INCEPTION PLACED ITSELF OUTSIDE THE LAW. NOW THAT F POLISARIO WAS GIVING GREATER SIGNS OF BEHAVING, HE IMPLIED, THE SPANISH MIGHT WELL HAVE LESS OR NO REASON TO CONSIDER IT ILLEGAL.

6. ON THE QUADRI PARTITE TALKS, LOS ARCOS SEEMED RATHER PESSIMISTIC, NOTING THAT THE MOROCCAN CONDITIONS MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE A POLITE WAY OF REFUSING TO JOIN IN THE TALKS. HE ADDED THAT THE GOS WAS NOT CERTAIN OF THE CONTENTS OF THE SOON-TO-BE-RELEASED REPORT OF THE GROUP FROM THE COMMITTEE OF 24. THE REPORTS THE GOS HAD RECEIVED WERE CONTRADICTORY AND NO CONCLUSIONS COULD BE DRAWN.

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